

## **CLAIMS**

### **What is claimed is:**

1. A toaster, comprising:  
means for activating the toaster; and  
5 a counter coupled to the activating means wherein the counter is incremented upon activation of the activating means.
2. The toaster of claim 1, further comprising a memory to store a value of the counter.
3. The toaster of claim 1, further comprising an indicator coupled to the  
10 counter, wherein the indicator produces a signal when the counter reaches a set value.
4. The toaster of claim 3, wherein the signal comprises an audible signal.
5. The toaster of claim 3, wherein the signal comprises a visual signal.
6. The toaster of claim 3, wherein the set value is adjustable.
7. The toaster of claim 3, further comprising means for disabling the toaster  
15 when the counter reaches the set value.
8. The toaster of claim 1, further comprising an indicator coupled to the counter, wherein the indicator produces a signal when the counter is less than a set value.
9. The toaster of claim 8, wherein the signal comprises an audible signal.
10. The toaster of claim 8, wherein the signal comprises a visual signal.
- 20 11. The toaster of claim 8, wherein the set value is adjustable.

12. The toaster of claim 1, further comprising means for resetting the counter.
13. The toaster of claim 12, wherein the resetting means comprises a push-button.
14. The toaster of claim 12 further comprising a crumb tray coupled to the  
5 resetting means.
15. A toaster, comprising:  
means for activating the toaster;  
a counter coupled to the activating means wherein the counter is incremented  
upon activation of the activating means;  
10 a memory to store a value of the counter; and  
an indicator coupled to the counter, wherein the indicator produces a signal when  
the counter reaches a set value.
16. The toaster of claim 15, wherein the signal comprises an audible signal.
17. The toaster of claim 15, wherein the signal comprises a visual signal.
- 15 18. The toaster of claim 15, further comprising a second indicator coupled to  
the counter, wherein the second indicator produces a second signal when the counter is  
less than the set value.
19. The toaster of claim 15, wherein the set value is adjustable.
20. The toaster of claim 15, further comprising means for disabling the toaster  
20 when the counter reaches the set value.
21. The toaster of claim 15, further comprising means for resetting the  
counter.

22. The toaster of claim 21, wherein the resetting means comprises a push-button.

23. The toaster of claim 21, further comprising a crumb tray coupled to the resetting means.

5        24. A method, comprising the steps of:  
counting a number of times a household appliance is activated;  
determining when the number reaches a set value; and  
when it is determined that the number reaches the set value, providing an indication that the number reached the set value.

10        25. The method of claim 24, wherein the indication is audible.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the indication is visual.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein when it is determined that the number reaches the set value, the method further comprises the step of disabling the household appliance.

15        28. The method of claim 24, wherein the set value is adjustable.

29. The method of claim 24, further comprising the steps of:  
receiving an indication to set the counter equal to zero; and  
setting the counter equal to zero.

20        30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of opening a crumb tray.

31. The method of claim 24, wherein the household appliance comprises a toaster.